

## UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS

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1818 Blanding Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
803.733.5400  
[uway.org](http://uway.org)



May 24, 2023

Office of the Governor  
1100 Gervais Street  
South Carolina State House  
Columbia, SC 29201

Requested Earmark Disclosure Information

RE: United Way of the Midlands; \$250,000

Sponsored by: Minority Leader Todd Rutherford

Recipient: United Way of the Midlands:  
EIN: 57-0314396  
DUNS: 128407194  
SAMS: GAZSGA6VVAM3

Point of Contact:  
Sara Fawcett  
President and CEO, United Way of the Midlands  
1818 Blanding Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
803-733-5410  
[sfawcett@uway.org](mailto:sfawcett@uway.org)  
[www.uway.org/ymu](http://www.uway.org/ymu)

### 1. The activity, function, or project for which earmark is intended.

Young Men United (YMU) is an evidence-informed initiative designed to create barrier-free pathways for young Black men to reach their academic and career goals by bringing wrap around supports to college capable high school students starting in the tenth or eleventh grade. YMU will guide participants through high school graduation, into and through their chosen post-secondary pathway, and support their transition from their post-secondary pathway to the workforce. YMU pairs rising high school juniors and seniors with professional mentors, places the students in eight-week summer internships, skills building courses, family financial support to ensure their educational journey is not interrupted, civic engagement, and job placement assistance.

The initiative will offer new partnerships with our four Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other institutions of higher learning in the Midlands. The goal of the program is to increase post-secondary education attainment with retention and improvement in workforce development.



YMU is modeled after the MKE Fellows Initiative in Milwaukee, which began as a college enrollment and internship program but has grown to a continuum of services to advance young men. The initiative has an 85% college graduation rate compared to the national average of 18% for Black males.

In early 2023, we held a launch event at Eau Claire High School. The event was well attended with full press coverage from local TV stations and print media.

[Link to Young Men United video](#)

## 2. Public purpose served by the project.

The program has the long-term goal of increasing postsecondary education attainment for male students of color, strengthening our workforce and increasing and retaining the number of employees with certifications and/or degrees for our growing region and state. Improving educational attainment leads to better jobs with advanced skill levels, higher levels of family stability and eventually to opportunities for wealth creation. The program also focuses on housing stability because it is a large factor in student success.

In the initial phase of the program launched in Spring 2023, 75 students will be supported in the first full year of the program with expansion to an additional high school, Columbia High School. Once established, 200 students will be supported yearly.

## 3. Project budget

	Year 2
	75 Young Men
Direct Program Staff	\$ 219,125
Student Expenses	\$ 651,250
Program Expenses	\$ 25,500
Evaluation Expenses	\$ 42,500
Subtotal	\$ 938,375
Administration and reporting	\$ 140,756
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 1,079,131</b>

## 4. Demonstrated community support and need.

Please see the attached letters of support

Young Men United strives to promote equality in educational achievement, income, and wealth between white and Black families in South Carolina. Our dedicated efforts are focused on addressing the existing gaps in financial stability between these communities. There are persistent disparities in financial security for white and Black families. According to the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances, the average wealth of white families is eight times higher than Black families. Other disparities include homeownership rates, participation in retirement plans, and day-to-day financial security. For example, the average emergency savings rate for a white family is \$5,000 compared to \$2,000 for Black families. These disparities span

generations and income level. According to the Brookings Institute, for Black families living in poverty, multigenerational gaps in income and wealth rates are almost double their white counterparts (2021).

Education is a contributing factor for earning potential, and lifetime earning potential is impacted by obtaining a college degree (Brookings Institute). People with bachelor's degrees typically make \$68,000 annually (2018 wages), which is 70% higher on average than those without a college degree. Lifetime earning potential also showed significant differences.

Beyond earning potential, the need for a college degree continues to rise. According to the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee, 60% of jobs in the state require a postsecondary degree or certification. Jobs in STEM are growing at twice the rate of other fields and often require advanced training or degrees. Despite the increased need for post-secondary education, many SC students are not graduating from high school prepared to succeed. In 2019, only 25% of SC high school graduates met college readiness benchmarks in science and only 33% met college ready benchmarks in reading.

Furthermore, while our students struggle to be ready for college, even fewer are enrolling. Enrollment of South Carolina students in college has declined over the past ten years. Black males represent the greatest decline. According to the SC Commission on Higher Education, Black male enrollment decreased 2.3% from 2010 to 2019.

When students do enroll in college, barriers prevent them from completing their degrees. Students of color have additional barriers to college completion due to financial hardship. In South Carolina, only 16% of Black men have a bachelor's degree compared to 33% of white males (2020 American Community Survey). The low rates of college graduation among Black men leads to lower earning potential, leaving economic mobility and wealth generation out of reach for many.

**5. Details of any state funds appropriated to the same entity for the same or similar purpose.**

The United Way received \$350,000 from the SC Department of Education in FY22-23 to pilot the Young Men United program. Funds from the FY23-24 state budget will be leveraged with private sector support to execute the first full year of the program.

Sincerely,



Sara Fawcett  
President & CEO  
United Way of the Midlands



May 23, 2023

Governor Henry McMaster  
Office of the Governor  
1100 Gervais Street  
South Carolina State House  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

On behalf of Richland County School District One, I would like to express my support for United Way of the Midlands' funding request for Young Men United (YMU). Young Men United is an evidence-informed initiative to create barrier-free pathways for young Black men to reach their academic and career dreams. This initiative brings wrap around supports to male high school-aged students to stay on track and succeed in college or the workforce. YMU serves young men who are college capable and college motivated but not college ready. This subset of students is often overlooked but can be successful with support.

Richland County School District One is a proud partner of YMU. YMU recruited the first cohort of participants from Eau Claire High School, a Richland County School District One school, and the program was met with excitement and great interest. Richland County School District One is involved in the YMU Advisory Council to steer the strategic direction of the program. Richland County School District One is pleased to continue to partner with YMU to bridge inequity in educational attainment, income, and wealth. By bettering the outcomes of our young men, we are creating generational change and strengthening the Midlands and South Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of United Way of the Midlands' funding request for Young Men United.

Sincerely,

Craig Witherspoon, Superintendent



May 23, 2023

Governor Henry McMaster  
Office of the Governor  
1100 Gervais Street  
South Carolina State House  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

On behalf of Richland County School District Two, I would like to express my support for United Way of the Midlands' funding request for Young Men United (YMU). Young Men United is an evidence-informed initiative to create barrier-free pathways for young Black men to reach their academic and career dreams. Richland Two has seen the effect of the wrap-around support this program brings to male high school-aged students, which allows them to stay on track and succeed in college or the workforce. YMU serves young men who are college-capable and college-motivated but not yet college ready. This subset of students is often overlooked but can be successful with support.

Richland County School District Two is a proud partner of YMU. YMU recruited the first cohort of participants from Richland Northeast High School, a Richland County School District Two school, and the program was met with excitement and great interest. Richland County School District Two is also involved in the YMU Advisory Council to steer the strategic direction of the program.

Richland County School District Two is pleased to continue to partner with YMU to bridge inequity in educational attainment, income, and wealth. By bettering the outcomes of our young men, we are creating generational change and strengthening the Midlands and South Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of United Way of the Midlands' funding request for Young Men United.

Sincerely,

Nancy J. Gregory  
Interim Superintendent

**Nancy J. Gregory**

Interim Superintendent  
ngregory@richland2.org  
www.richland2.org

May 18, 2023

Governor Henry McMaster  
Office of the Governor  
1100 Gervais Street  
South Carolina State House  
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

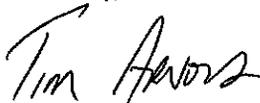
On behalf of Colonial Life, I would like to express my support for United Way of the Midlands' funding request for Young Men United (YMU). Young Men United is an evidence-informed initiative to create barrier-free pathways for young Black men to reach their academic and career dreams. This initiative brings wrap around supports to male high school-aged students to stay on track and succeed in college or the workforce. YMU serves young men who are college capable and college motivated but not college ready. This subset of students is often overlooked but can be successful with support.

Colonial Life is a Founding Partner of Young Men United. As the Founding Partner, Colonial Life provides leadership on the YMU Advisory Committee, subcommittees, recruits mentors from our employee pool, and financially supports the program through grant funding.

Colonial Life is pleased to continue to partner with YMU to bridge inequity in educational attainment, income, and wealth. By bettering the outcomes of our young men, we are creating generational change and strengthening the Midlands and South Carolina.

Thank you for your consideration of United Way of the Midlands' funding request for Young Men United.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Arnold". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "T" and "A".

Tim Arnold  
EVP, VB & President

Colonial Life Insurance